

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1262
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
AMCONSUL BELIZE
USCINCSO

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEGUCIGALPA 3926

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR, PGOV, PDIP, PINT, HO, US
SUBJ: U.S. RELATIONS WITH NEW HONDURAN LEADERSHIP

REF: (A) STATE 206635, (B) STATE 203541

1. SUMMARY: ACCOMPANIED BY DCM, I CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER PALMA GALVEZ ON AUGUST 16 TO DELIVER NOTE ON CONTINUED RELATIONS AND UNDERLINE U.S. INTEREST IN HUMAN RIGHTS AND PEACEFUL RESOLUTION OF HONDURAN/EL SALVADOR BORDER DISPUTE. PALMA GAVE ME STRONG ASSURANCES THAT GOH WILL RESPECT HUMAN RIGHTS, INCLUDING ELECTORAL SCHEDULE, PRESS FREEDOM AND COMMITMENT TO DEVELOPMENT; HE REITERATED DESIRE FOR AMICABLE SETTLEMENT WITH EL SALVADOR. END SUMMARY.

2. AS INSTRUCTED IN REF A, ON AUGUST 16 I HAND-CARRIED THIRD PERSON DIPLOMATIC NOTE TO FOREIGN MINISTER PALMA GALVEZ REPORTING OUR DESIRE FOR CONTINUED RELATIONS. HE CLEARLY WAS RELIEVED TO HAVE OUR NOTE AND GET THIS MATTER OVER WITH, ALTHOUGH HE POINTED OUT THAT A NOTE WAS REALLY NOT REQUIRED.

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3. WHEN I EXPRESSED USG'S INTEREST IN FREE ELECTIONS, HE INTERRUPTED ME TO STATE THEY WILL TAKE PLACE AS ANNOUNCED. I THEN MENTIONED FREEDOM OF THE PRESS, WITH PALMA INTERJECTING THAT PRESIDENT PAZ PROMISED SUCH FREEDOM WOULD CONTINUE.

4. TURNING TO ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT, I MENTIONED OUR

INTEREST IN QUALIFIED ASSIGNMENTS TO ECONOMIC AGENCIES AND THE IMPORTANCE OF SELECTING INDIVIDUALS WHO ARE RESPECTED INTERNATIONALLY. PALMA REPLIED THAT THERE HAS BEEN MUCH IDLE SPECULATION ON NEW ECONOMIC LEADERSHIP BUT THAT UP TO NOW NO FINAL DECISIONS HAVE BEEN MADE. HE COMMENTED THAT EVEN CENTRAL BANK PRESIDENT BUESO'S NAME IS UNDER CONSIDERATION FOR RE-APPOINTMENT.

5. RETURNING TO HUMAN RIGHTS SUBJECT, PALMA SAID THAT INTER-AMERICAN COMMISSION ON HUMANRIGHTS HAS ONLY ONE HONDURAN CASE BEFORE IT. THE CASE DATES TO 1975, HE SAID, AND RELATES TO THE DENIED REGISTRATION OF THE POPULAR PROGRESSIVE PARTY (A VERY SMALL POLITICAL GROUP). PALMA SAID THAT THIS MATTER IS BEING REVIEWED BY HIS GOVERNMENT AND SHOULD BE RESOLVED WITH THE CURRENT RESUMPTION OF ELECTORAL ACTIVITY.

6. BEFORE I COULD EXPRESS OUR INTEREST IN THE HONDURAS/EL SALVADOR BORDER ISSUE, GALVEZ SAID THAT A VERY SKILLED HONDURAN NEGOTIATOR WOULD REPLACE CESAR BATRES. IT IS PEDRO PINEDA MADRID, WHO HAS BEEN INTIMATELY INVOLVED IN BORDER QUESTION SINCE 1967. GIVEN THE IMPORTANCE OF PROBLEM, GALVEZ CONTINUED, PINEDA IS BEING ASKED TO LEAVE HIS PRESIDENCY OF THE NATIONAL AGRARIAN COUNCIL TO REPLACE BATRES. (PINEDA IS A RESPECTED LAWYER AND A FORMER MINISTER OF FINANCE AND MEMBER OF CONGRESS).

7. COMMENT: GALVEZ KNOWS VERY WELL WHAT THE UNITED STATES IS INTERESTED IN AND ALMOST CUT ME SHORT AT TIMES TO REASSURE US.
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I AM CALLING ON PRESIDENT PAZ TODAY (AUGUST 16) TO MAKE POINTS OUTLINED REF B. WILL REPORT PROMPTLY.
JARAMILLO

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NNN

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